

Message Text

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PAGE 01 BONN 09678 01 OF 02 162115Z

67

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SY-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

OC-05 CCO-00 SSO-00 IO-10 /074 W

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R 161741Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY BONN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0792

INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

AMCONSUL FRANKFURT

AMCONSUL HAMBURG

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMCONSUL STUTTGART

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 09678

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINS, PINT, WG

SUBJECT: ALLEGED US INVOLVEMENT IN WIRE TAPPING OF CDU LEADERS

REF: STATE 139319

1. A STATEMENT DENYING U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE MONITORING OF A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN CDU LEADERS KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF WAS ISSUED JUNE 14 BY AMEMBASSY-USIS BONN VIA TELEX AND TELEPHONE IN ENGLISH AND GERMAN TO 40 NEWS AGENCIES, NEWSPAPERS, RADIO AND TELEVISION STATIONS AND CORRESPONDENTS IN THE FRG. THE TEXT OF THE STATEMENT CORRESPONDED TO THE TEXT PROPOSED IN REFTEL.
UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 02 BONN 09678 01 OF 02 162115Z

THE SUBSTANCE OF THE STATEMENT WAS CARRIED BY ALL MAJOR

MEDIA, AND THE GERMAN PRESS AGENCY, DPA, CARRIED THE FULL TEXT IN ITS COUNTRY-WIDE SERVICE.

2. PREVIOUS TO THE ISSUANCE OF THE STATEMENT THERE HAD BEEN A NUMBER OF ALLUSIONS TO POSSIBLE U.S. INVOLVEMENT IN THE MONITORING, WITH THE MASS-CIRCULATION BILD-ZEITUNG ASSERTING FRIDAY THAT AN AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY WAS "PROBABLY" RESPONSIBLE. THIS ASSUMPTION WAS LARGELY DISPELLED LATE FRIDAY MORNING BY THE FRG PRESS SPOKESMAN, KLAUS BOELLING, WHO TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THERE WAS "NO EVIDENCE AT ALL TO SUPPORT SUCH SPECULATION." BOELLING POINTED OUT THAT IT WOULD HAVE BEEN "CHILD'S PLAY" TO REPRODUCE THE FORMS ON WHICH THE TELEPHONE CONVERSATION WAS RECORDED. HE SAID FURTHER THAT FRG OFFICIALS HAD BEEN IN TOUCH WITH THE AMEMBASSY BONN, AND THAT AS A RESULT HE WAS ABLE TO SAY THAT SPECULATION INVOLVING THE U.S. IN THE INCIDENT "LACKS ANY BASIS." HIS STATEMENT RECEIVED WIDE PLAY IN RADIO AND TELEVISION NEWSCASTS THROUGHOUT THE DAY AND WAS CARRIED IN ALL MAJOR NEWSPAPERS THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

3. ONLY TWO NEWSPAPERS APPEAR IN THE FRG SUNDAYS, BILD AM SONNTAG AND WELT AM SONNTAG, AND BOTH CARRIED THE MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF THE AMEMBASSY STATEMENT. BOTH SAID THERE WAS NO REASON TO SUSPECT AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT. BILD SUGGESTED THAT THE SOVIET UNION PLAYED A ROLE IN THE AFFAIR.

4. THE AMEMBASSY STATEMENT WAS GIVEN EXTENSIVE PLAY IN MONDAY'S PRESS, ALTHOUGH MOST COMMENT CENTERED ON THE LACK OF SECURITY IN THE FRG (E.G., WESTDEUTSCHE ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG, ESSEN: "WE CAN ASSUME THAT MANY MORE TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS ARE BEING MONITORED THAN THE CITIZENRY AND EVEN THE PARLIAMENTARY CONTROL GROUPS CAN IMAGINE.") THE BILD-ZEITUNG QUOTED THE INTERIOR MINISTER OF THE RHINELAND PALATINATE, HEINZ SCHWARZ, WHO EXCLUDED THE POSSIBILITY OF CIA INVOLVEMENT. "ONE SHOULD NOT EXPECT THE AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICE TO BE SO STUPID AS TO TAP A TELEPHONE CONVERSATION AND MAIL OFF THE TRANSCRIPT ON ITS OWN FORMS," SCHWARZ WAS UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BONN 09678 01 OF 02 162115Z

QUOTED AS SAYING. THE SPOKESMAN FOR THE CDU/CSU PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, KARL MILTNER, SAID IN AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DEUTSCHER DEPESCHEN-DIENST (DDP) THAT THE CASE WAS APPARENTLY "A CONCERTED ACTION AGAINST THE U.S.A." HE SAID THE PURPOSE OF THE "MISINFORMATION" WAS TO PROMPT THE FRG "TO DEFAME THE U.S.A., AND ABOVE ALL THE CIA."

5. MOST MEDIA REPORTED THAT THERE WAS NO CLUE AS TO WHO MIGHT HAVE MONITORED THE KOHL-BIEDENKOPF CONVERSATION OR EVEN HOW THE MONITORING WAS CARRIED OUT. "BONN IS STILL GROPING IN THE DARK," THE FRANKFURTER RUNDSCHAU REPORTED MONDAY, WHILE THE SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG SAID THAT "A HOT CLUE" SIMPLY DID NOT EXIST.

6. OTHER RELEVANT COMMENT: SUEDEDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (INDEPENDENT): "IT WILL TAKE TIME TO CLARIFY THE

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 01 BONN 09678 02 OF 02 161756Z

67

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FM AMEMBASSY BONN

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INFO USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION USBERLIN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION NATO BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL BREMEN

AMCONSUL DUSSELDORF

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UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 09678

LATEST SCANDAL OF TELEPHONE MONITORING, IF IT CAN EVER BE CLARIFIED... WHAT COULD BE DONE NOW IS TO TAKE PREVENTIVE ACTION, ESPECIALLY IN REGARD TO THE GENERAL DANGER REPRESENTED BY ELECTRONIC "BUGGING" DEVICES ... ON THE BASIS OF CAUTIOUS ESTIMATES, THERE ARE AT LEAST HALF A MILLION SUCH BUGS IN THE POSSESSION OF PEOPLE IN THE FRG..." BONNER RUNDSCHAU (PRO-CDU): "IT IS LIKELY THAT SOME FOREIGN COUNTRY IS INVOLVED IN THIS AFFAIR. AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF AFFAIRS CONCERNING INTELLIGENCE ACTIVITIES IN THE FRG IN RECENT YEARS INDICATED TO EASTERN COUNTRIES THAT UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BONN 09678 02 OF 02 161756Z

THE GROUND HERE IS WELL PREPARED FOR DISSEMINATING MISLEADING INFORMATION..." DIE WELT (RIGHT-CENTER): "...THE TRANSCRIPT (OF THE MONITORED TELEPHONE CONVERSATION BETWEEN KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF) WAS WRITTEN ON 'AGENTS REPORT' PAPER AS USED BY THE AMERICAN ARMY. THEREFORE, INITIAL SUSPICION WAS BOUND TO BE DIRECTED AGAINST THE AMERICANS. IT FITTED INTO THE ATMOSPHERE OF THE CIA SCANDAL... AMERICAN AUTHORITIES AND BONN GOVERNMENT EXPERTS CONSIDER THE TRANSCRIPT A FABRICATION. WHO COULD BE INTERESTED IN MONITORING A DIALOGUE BETWEEN KOHL AND BIEDENKOPF THE CONTENTS OF WHICH IS HARDLY WORTH KNOWING? IT COULD ONLY BE PEOPLE INTERESTED IN BRINGING ABOUT A MONITORING SCANDAL."

7. THE WEEKLY NEWSMAGAZINE DER SPIEGEL, WHICH HAD A PUBLISHING DEADLINE OF JUNE 14 (BEFORE THE AMEMBASSY STATEMENT WAS RELEASED) AND APPEARED ON NEWSSTANDS JUNE 16 TOUCHED ALL BASES IN THE COURSE OF A LONG COVER STORY ON THE INCIDENT. THE ARTICLE DID NOT DEFINITELY EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY OF U.S. INVOLVEMENT, BUT IT PRESENTED A NUMBER OF REASONS WHY THIS WAS HIGHLY UNLIKELY, REFERRING SPECIFICALLY TO THE WAY IN WHICH THE MONITORED INFORMATION WAS PRESENTED. THE ARTICLE POINTED TO POSSIBLE INVOLVEMENT BY THE GDR OR BY FRIENDS OF CSU CHAIRMAN FRANZ-JOSEF STRAUSS, THE LATTER A RIVAL OF KOHL'S FOR THE CDU/CSU CHANCELLOR CANDIDACY. THE ARTICLE CONCLUDED, HOWEVER, THAT "THE CHANCES OF GETTING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE AFFAIR ARE MINIMAL." CASH

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